

## **Claims**

We claim:

1. A method of collecting and distributing commercial data among suppliers and purchasers, comprising the steps of:

establishing a registry database for containing:

user records defining contact information pertaining to respective  
suppliers and purchasers,

item records defining goods or services offered by the suppliers,

subscription records defining goods or services of interest to  
purchasers

connecting the registry database with a data communication network;

connecting a local processing adapter to the data communication

network at a user location, the local processing adapter

performing steps of:

enabling a user to establish a user record, and

enabling a user to establish a subscription record,

receiving item records from users at the registry;

matching received item records with subscription records;

transmitting notifications of item records from the registry to the local  
processing adapter on the basis of said matching step.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of receiving said notifications at the local processing adapter, arranging said notifications into a list of notifications, accepting user options in response to said notifications provided on said list.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of storing a set of compliance rules in the registry data, and comparing each of said notifications with said compliance rules prior to entry in the registry.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a local database at the user location for storing at least a selected portion of the registry item records, and further comprising the step of directly updating the local database in accordance with said notifications, to maintain synchronization of the local database with the registry database.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of providing said notifications to a user interface in parallel with updating the local database.
6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of receiving item records comprises receiving item records in extensible mark-up language (XML) format.
7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of checking receiving item records for compliance with a predetermined document type definition.
8. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of transmitting notifications comprises the step of transmitting said notifications in the form of at least one of: (i) a worklist delivered to the local processing adapter via a graphical user interface to the registry, (ii) an email message, and (iii) an XML document transmission, on a user-selectable basis.

9. A registry for providing commercial trading partners with access to information pertaining to goods or services, comprising:

a database configured for storing records defining goods and services offered by trading partners;

a network server for connecting the database with a computer network and configured to provide a graphical user interface accessible to the trading partners through said computer network via a thin client, for enabling trading partners to establish said records and to search said records, the network server further configured to receive document transmissions establishing said records, whereby the trading partners may selectively employ one of said graphical user interface and said document transmissions to establish said records.

10. The registry of claim 9 wherein said network server is configured to receive said document transmissions in XML format.

11. The registry of claim 9 wherein said database is further configured to store records defining categories of goods and services of interest to each of said trading partners, and wherein said network server is configured to transmit notifications to said trading partners upon establishment of a new record within a defined category of interest.

12. The registry of claim 11 wherein said network server is configured to transmit said notifications in the form of: (i) a worklist accessible through the computer network via a graphical user interface to the network server, (ii) an email message, and (iii) an XML document transmission, on a user-selectable

basis.

13. The registry of claim 12 wherein the notifications comprise XML document transmissions, and wherein the network server is configured to determine compliance of said transmissions with a predetermined document type definition.

14. The registry of claim 11 wherein said network server is configured to receive responses from the trading partners to said notifications, and to deliver said responses to the trading partner corresponding to said new record.

15. The registry of claim 14 wherein said network server is configured to receive said responses in the form of predetermined messages indicating interest or lack of interest in the good or service defined by the new record by a responding trading partner.

16. The registry of claim 11 wherein the network server is configured to communicate said notifications to at least one local database maintained by a trading partner, to maintain synchronization of the local database with the registry database.